

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS IN MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Eph.5:19; Col.3:16

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By this we mean what God requires of his people when we worship him in song.
2. In this study we shall establish by book, chapter and verse that God not only requires that we worship him in song, but that he has authorized by specific authority the kind of music he will accept in worship.
3. This being the case it is therefore not left up to man to decide the kind of music to use in worship of God. For God has decided that for man who must act by God's authority in religion, not man's! Cf. Deut.4:2; Mt.7:21; 1Cor.4:6; 1Cor.10:31; Col.3:17; 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18,19; 2Jno.9,10.
4. His requirements for us are in the N.T., not the O.T.; he speaks to us by his Son in the N.T., not Moses in the O.T., Jno.1:17; Heb.1:1,2;10:9,10; 8:6-13; 9:15-17; Col.2:14-17.
5. Also, we will establish and emphasize what God requires of each Christian, each worshipper, in the music in worship.
6. What, then, are God's requirements in music in worship in this age?

II. DISCUSSION

A. GOD REQUIRES VOCAL MUSIC.

1. There are only two kinds of music: Vocal and Mechanical Instru.
2. The music passages of the N.T. prove that God has specified the kind he will accept, which is vocal, Mt.26:30; Mk.14:26; Ac.16:25; Rom.15:9 1Cor.14:15; Eph.5:19; Col.3:16; Heb.2:12; 13:15; Jas.5:13.
3. If you believe mechanical instrumental music in worship of God is authorized by God in the N.T. church and that God will thus accept such in worship, name or cite the N.T. passage that so authorizes it!

B. GOD REQUIRES EACH CHRISTIAN, EACH WORSHIPPER, TO SING PRAISES TO HIM IN WORSHIP, Eph.5:19; Col.3:19.

1. These two passages leave no doubt that singing in worship of God is required of each Christian, each worshipper.

2. Therefore, to attend worship services and fail or refuse to sing, when one is able to do so, is failing to meet God's requirements. Cf. 1Jno.5:3; Jno.14:15,21,23,24; Heb.5:8,9.
3. Since each one or one and all worshippers are required to sing in worship of God, this does away with solos, with choirs, etc.

C. GOD REQUIRES THE WORSHIPPERS TO SING “WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD,” AND/OR TO “SING AND MAKE MELODY IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD,” Col.3:16; Eph.5:19.

1. To sing “with grace in your hearts to the Lord” is to do so as a result of being prompted (incited or moved or motivated to do so) by God's grace; to do so as one subject to the power of his grace or his favor being extended to you through Jesus Christ by means of the gospel.
 - a. It means to sing God's praises with thankful, joyful hearts.
 - b. To do so in honor of God.
2. Note that this divine requirement includes making the melody in the heart as you sing praises to God.
 - a. Yes, that means there is an instrument involved in the kind of music God specifies in worship of him – an instrument upon which the melody is made.
 - b. That instrument is identified as the human heart!
 - c. That is the only instrument authorized in this passage or in any other N.T. passage in one's worship of God.
 - d. The human heart is the instrument from which the music in worship must come in the case of each worshipper!

D. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE “PSALLO” ARGUMENT MADE TO JUSTIFY MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC IN THE N.T. CHURCH?

1. The Greek verb “psallo” is used some five times in the N.T., and is translated “sing” (Rom.15:9), “sing” (1Cor.14:15, twice), “make melody” (Eph.5:19), and “sing psalms” (Jas.5:13).
2. The noun form of the same word (psalmos) translated “psalms,” is found in several passages; such as: Lk.20:32; 24:44; Ac.1:20; 13:33; 1Cor.26; Eph.5:19; Col.3:16.
3. Today many of those who use mechanical instruments of music in worship argue long and loud that the word “psallo” justifies the mechanical instrument in worship of God because of its literal meaning

to “pluck” or “twang,” and because they ***claim*** (falsely so) that the Greek lexicons say it is used of playing a mechanical instrument even in its N.T. usage.

- a. Thus, they contend that mechanical instrumental music inheres in the word “psallo” of Eph.5:19.
- b. Moreover, some have been so bold, brazen or audacious as to insert the mechanical instrument in their N.T. translation of the verse.

4. Now we address both the meaning of the word “psallo” and its use in the N.T.

a. Literally and or primarily according to:

- (1) W.E. Vine, III,58, it means, “to twitch, twang.”
- (2) Thayer, 675, it means, “to cause to vibrate, to pluck,” and is used to “twang.”
- (3) Liddell and Scott, it is defined “to touch sharply, to pluck, twitch,” and is used of plucking the hair, a bowstring, a carpenter’s line, or the strings of an instrument.

b. According to both Vine and Thayer the word “psallo” (translated “making melody” in Eph.5:19) can be and was used in the Septuagent (the Greek Version of the O.T.: still used in the Eastern Orthodox or Greek Orthodox Church) “to twitch or twang or pluck the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate, or to play harp.”

- (1) And that, of course, because mechanical instrumental music in worship of God was authorized in the O.T., 2Chr. 29:25; Psa.81:1-4.

c. But in the N.T. use of the word “psallo” neither Vine nor Thayer agree that it used with reference to mechanical instruments of music in worship of God.

- (1) Vine, III, 58, says: it “denotes in the N.T. to sing a hymn, sing praise.”
- (2) Thayer, 675, says: it denotes “in the N.T. to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song.”

5. Therefore, from the primary meaning of the verb “psallo”, which is “to touch, pluck, pull, twitch or twang,” the word itself does not tell us what is to be plucked, or what the object of the verb is.

a. The ***object*** of the verb does not inhere in the verb or the word itself.

b. The ***what*** or the ***object*** of the verb “psallo” is to be determined from the context.

- c. The *object* of the verb “psallo” in the N.T. text is the human heart: “...making melody (psalloing) in your heart,” Eph.5:19.
- 6. The evidence for the mechanical instrument of music in Eph.5:19 and Col.3:16 is missing; and there are no other N.T. passages to which its advocates can go to seek to justify their fallacious argument.
 - a. There is no Greek lexicon that tells us that mechanical instruments of music inhere in the term “psallo”.
 - b. There is no Greek lexicon that tells us the term “psallo” is so used in the N.T.
 - c. There is no legitimate translation that translates the verb “psallo” as playing on mechanical instruments.
 - d. Those who make the “psallo” argument are simply wrong. Dead wrong! Scripturally wrong!
- 7. Furthermore, if the mechanical instrument of music inheres in the verb “psallo”:
 - a. Then it must be used! We have no choice but to use it in order to obey God!
 - b. Then, also, it would be required that each and every worshipper use a mechanical instrument of music in the worship service because each and every worshipper is required to “psallo” – “make melody in the heart” – in order to obey God.
 - (1) 100 worshippers, then 100 mechanical instruments are required! 300 worshippers, 300 instruments!
 - (2) Think of the size of buildings all that would require!
 - c. Then, also, each worshipper would have to have and use a specific kind of musical instrument – a harp or a stringed instrument of some kind, because the verb means “to pluck, pull, twitch, or twang” – not blow or beat, etc.
 - (1) This would rule out the piano, the trumpet, the flute, the drum, etc.

E. FINALLY, WE ADDRESS TWO OTHER HUMAN ACCOMPANIMENTS CREEPING INTO THE WORSHIP OF PRAISE OF SOME PROFESSED N.T. CHRISTIANS.

- 1. 1st, Hand clapping while singing praises to God during worship services is more and more becoming a practice among some brethren in their aping the praise service of certain Denominations.

- a. Such activity is no more divinely authorized as an act of worship in the N.T. church than is “foot-washing” practiced by the General Baptist people.
 - b. Eph.5:19 and Col.3:16 are the passages which instruct us what to do in our worship in song with nothing therein authorizing hand clapping while singing anymore than dancing while singing or playing a mechanical instrument while singing – all such is an appeal to the flesh, not the spirit.
 - c. Hand clapping is okay in the home when playing with a child and singing “Patty Cake, Patty Cake,” but it is unacceptable in singing spiritual songs in N.T. worship!
2. 2nd, Vocal Percussion.
- a. You may or may not have heard of it, or may or may not know what it is; but Vocal percussion is now a sophisticated component of contemporary a cappella music practiced by some professing to be N.T. Christians in their worship services.
 - b. “Percussion” is the beating or striking of a musical instrument; the playing of music by striking instruments with sticks, etc.
 - c. All of us are somewhat familiar with “percussion instruments” that form a section of a band or orchestra.
 - d. Well, Vocal percussion (or mouth drumming) of which we speak is the production of percussive sounds using only the speech apparatus of men which is now being practiced by some professed N.T. Christians in their worship services.
 - e. As we said, Vocal percussion is now a sophisticated component of contemporary a cappella music.
 - f. There are groups known as Octappella practicing this type of music to accompany the singing of the members in their worship.
 - (1) Their music is made entirely a cappella, using no mechanical instruments of any kind, though by their sounds they are ***imitating*** the sound of such mechanical instruments as they accompany the a cappella music of praise in worship of God.
 - (2) To hear them (I am told) without seeing them you would think the song service was being accompanied by the very percussion instruments the sounds of which they are imitating.
 - g. Once again this type of music is unauthorized by Eph.5:19 and Col.3:16, for herein the Lord specified the nature of the vocal music authorized when he said, “singing.”

- (1) If we're all singing (as the Lord commanded that we should be), then there won't be any room for any vocal percussionists in the worship of the N.T. church.
3. The command to sing is specific and authorizes only singing. It therefore excludes accompanying the singing with hand clapping, vocal percussion, humming, whistling, yodeling, playing a mechanical instrument, etc.
4. All such efforts to fill the worship experience with excitement and pizzazz in these contemporary services are simply human inventions which supplant what God designed for our spiritual edification, his praise and his glory.
 - a. They are all appeals to the flesh, not the spirit!

III. CONCLUSION

1. Remember what God has authorized and required in worship in song.
2. Remember what God requires of each Christian, each worshipper, in the song service.
 - a. Each one is to sing.
 - b. Each one is to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.
 - c. Each one is to sing with grace in the heart to the Lord; to sing and make melody in the heart to the Lord.
3. Therefore, remember God requires and has specified the instrument to be used in singing praise to him – the human heart – we pluck the heart-strings when we “psallo” to God in our worship.
4. Remember that specific authority both limits and excludes:
 - a. It limits us to what is specified.
 - b. Therefore, it excludes all else.
 - c. Illustrations: The Ark; the Gospel; Baptism for R.of Sins, etc.